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RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE 1081
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RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA IMMEDIATE 0264
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SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D - C O P Y (R E M R E F L I N E)

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: SECURITY COUNCIL PUSHES AU TO TAKE LEAD IN SOMALIA

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11. (SBU) SUMMARY. Under Secretary-General Gambari told Security Council members on January 10 that conditions on the ground in Somalia provide a narrow window for consolidating the authority of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and establishing an inclusive political process. He said Ethiopian forces cannot stay because Somali public sentiment against their presence is building daily, but neither can they leave in the short term without creating a dangerous security vacuum. Gambari and Council members agreed the UN must assist the African Union to quickly deploy a stabilization force to include any available elements of the foundering IGASOM force. Gambari called air strikes in the south a "dangerous new element," without referring to U.S. participation. The U.S. reported that Uganda has confirmed its readiness to deploy troops in Somalia and placed the military strike in the south in a context of the ongoing U.S. pursuit of known terrorists. The British are drafting a new Security Council resolution to reflect recent events. END SUMMARY.

Gambari to SC: Act Now; This May Be The Best Chance we Get

12. (SBU) In a January 10 briefing, UN Undersecretary for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambari told Security Council members that conditions on the ground in Somalia, particularly in Mogadishu, are in very fragile equilibrium. He said early public relief at the withdrawal of the Islamic Courts Union (UIC) is giving way to building resentment against the Ethiopian military presence, a dynamic that Ethiopia clearly understands means its forces cannot stay. Gambari said precipitous Ethiopian withdrawal, on the other hand, would leave a security vacuum that could plunge Somalia into chaos.

13. (SBU) Gambari said the TFG must take advantage of the precarious peace to quickly consolidate its internal structure and to immediately launch a comprehensive outreach to establish dialogue with opposition elements including UIC moderates. Simultaneously with this TFG build-out, Gambari said, an international stabilization force must be created and deployed to relieve Ethiopian forces. He looks to the African Union (AU) to create this force, building on the well-intentioned but unsuccessful IGAD effort, and he looks to the wider international community to pay for it.

¶4. (SBU) Emphasizing that conditions are already beginning to worsen, Gambari noted that warlords have been re-establishing shake-down roadblocks in and around Mogadishu and that public demonstrations have already been organized against the Ethiopian military presence and against TFG attempts at implementing its new disarmament edict. He also called air strikes in the south, without naming the U.S., a "dangerous new element."

Council Members: Reality Prompts Consensus

¶5. (SBU) Council members recognized the new reality in Somalia brought about by the Ethiopian intervention and uniformly supported Gambari's proposed way ahead, agreeing particularly to support in all possible ways TFG consolidation and outreach and to assist the AU in creating a deployable force as quickly as possible to allow redeployment of the Ethiopian forces. Several members looked expectantly to the January 15 AU Peace and Security Council meeting for a showing of AU leadership on Somalia. Congo and Indonesia were critical of the air strikes in the south, without referring to their participants; Italy more directly criticized "unilateral" military actions. Ambassador Sanders indicated that Uganda had recently confirmed to A/S Frazer its readiness to deploy forces in Somalia, recounted USG financial assistance to Somalia, and addressed the recent air strikes by saying, "While the U.S. government does not comment on operational matters, we have said consistently that Al-Qaida and its affiliates have had an active presence in Somalia and East Africa. Al-Qaida operatives have planned and executed horrendous terrorist attacks, including against two of our Embassies in 1998, resulting in the deaths of over 200 innocent Africans and Americans and injuring over 4,000 innocent civilians. There should be no safe haven for Al-Qaida or its supporters." The UK volunteered to draft a

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new resolution to enable the deployment of a stabilization force.
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